



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE NABS 25 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced the arrests of 25 individuals that were attempting to illegally enter the United States through the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The arrests are as a result of a successful joint operation between ICE, the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the USVI Police Department.

All of those apprehended this week have been processed by ICE and are in federal custody at the ICE detention center in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Those arrested represent the following countries: Haiti, Dominica, St. Lucia and the Dominican Republic. All will remain in ICE custody awaiting the outcome of their cases.

During the last four fiscal years, ICE has arrested more than 1900 illegal immigrants in the United States Virgin Islands. More than 75 percent of those, occurred on the island of St. John.

“ICE and our Department of Homeland Security partners in the U.S. Virgin Islands are working together with state and local law enforcement agencies to detect and apprehend those who think that can break the law and get away with it,” said Leo I. Morales, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. “Those who try to use St. John, St. Thomas and St. Croix as a springboard to enter the United States illegally should think twice.”

Disrupting and dismantling human smuggling and trafficking rings has been a top priority for ICE since the agency was established in March 2003, given the potential threat that these organizations pose both to national security and public safety. With ICE’s broad authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws and its expertise in financial investigations, the agency is able to pursue human smuggling organizations more aggressively than ever before. As a result, ICE agents arrested more than 1,630 human smugglers nationwide in fiscal year 2004.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.